

~~TOP SECRET~~DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

IDEALIST OXCART GAMBIT

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

17 AUG 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY ←

SUBJECT: Modernization of U-2 Fleet

Over the past several months, the NRO has analyzed in considerable detail the desirability of initiating a new production run of U-2 aircraft in FY 66.

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Recently, the Directors of Programs B and D recommended the procurement of 27 improved U-2 aircraft in FY 66 and 67 for SAC and the CIA. Airframe/engine cost for this proposed program would approximate [] in those two years; sensors and defensive equipment would require an additional investment.

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Unfortunately, our analyses have been unable to verify an unequivocal requirement to produce an improved U-2:

a. Although a new version would have somewhat improved performance (climb, ceiling, maneuverability at altitude, etc), it would still be highly vulnerable to both ground and air missiles; thus, important areas of the world would continue to be denied to U-2 overflight.

b. In the same time frame, the OXCART and SR-71 aircraft, the advanced GAMBIT, and a new search/surveillance satellite system will all be operational.

c. At the present time, there are 21 U-2's available to Program B and SAC. The SAC U-2's are J-57 powered and have lower performance than those assigned to Program B. However; if the SAC aircraft were modified and up-dated, the total fleet should be adequate to meet national needs at least through FY 68.

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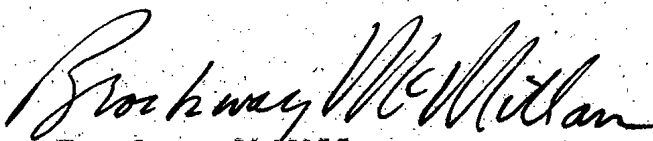
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In view of the above, plus the fact that improved U-2's can be produced and delivered in about fifteen months, I believe we can defer for at least another year any decision on new aircraft procurement. However, modernization of SAC U-2's to the same general configuration as those aircraft assigned to Program B should be initiated now; I propose to accomplish such a program in FY 66 and 67.



Brockway McMillan
Director
National Reconnaissance Office

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